

RETAIL PRICES - MARCH QUARTER, 1951.

All Items - "C" Series.

Index numbers of retail prices of all items ("C" Series) - with the weighted average of the six capital cities in 1923-1927 as base of 1000 - for the March quarter, 1951, with figures for December quarter, 1950, for comparison (in brackets), were:- Brisbane, 1612 (1546); Toowoomba, 1623 (1562); Rockhampton, 1631 (1577); Townsville, 1651 (1595); Bundaberg, 1607 (1548); and Warwick, 1591 (1533).

The rise in prices in Brisbane in the March quarter of 1951 (as measured by the "C" Series index number) was 4.3 per cent., which was exactly the same as in the preceding quarter. Apart from these two quarters, the greatest rise ever recorded was 3.7 per cent. in the September quarter of 1936. Neither food and grocery nor clothing and footwear prices increased as much in the latest quarter as in the December quarter of 1950, but miscellaneous items, which include public utilities such as electricity, gas, and rail and tram fares, showed a record increase of 8.3 per cent. This group was, however, still only 61.4 per cent. dearer than in 1938-39, compared with an increase of 88.1 per cent. for food and groceries and 193.8 per cent. for clothing and footwear.

The latest increase brought the total rise in the "C" Series index for the twelve months ended March, 1951, to 14.0 per cent., compared with 9.2 per cent. for the corresponding period ended March, 1950.

The quarter's increase of 4.3 per cent. in Brisbane was greater than that for any of the other five cities for which figures are available, due to the provincial cities generally recording smaller increases in the prices of clothing and footwear and of miscellaneous items. The increase in food and grocery prices was, on the other hand, less in Brisbane than in any other city except Bundaberg which recorded the same percentage rise.

The indexes show the following percentage increases when compared with those for the periods shown.

Retail Price Index, "C" Series, Percentage Increases,
March Quarter, 1951.

City.		From Year Ended June, 1939.	From March Quarter, 1950.	From December Quarter, 1950.
		%	%	%
Brisbane .. ..	..	86.8	14.0	4.3
Toowoomba .. ..	..	90.7	13.6	3.9
Rockhampton.. ..	..	89.4	14.2	3.4
Townsville .. ..	..	81.0	12.4	3.5
Bundaberg .. ..	..	91.1	14.7	3.8
Warwick .. ..	..	93.6	13.2	3.8

Food and groceries, clothing and footwear, and the miscellaneous group of items comprising household drapery and hardware, fuel, light, fares, etc., have shown the following percentage changes during the last quarter and since 1938-39.

Retail Prices, Percentage Increases,
March Quarter, 1951.

City.	Food and Groceries.		Clothing and Footwear.		Miscellaneous Items.	
	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From Decr. Quarter, 1950.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From Decr. Quarter, 1950.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From Decr. Quarter, 1950.
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Brisbane ..	88.1	3.8	193.8	3.4	61.4	8.3
Toowoomba..	101.5	4.2	190.0	2.8	57.6	6.2
Rockhampton	92.7	4.0	184.1	2.3	61.1	6.5
Townsville	78.0	4.0	190.1	2.4	64.2	7.3
Bundaberg..	88.4	3.8	189.7	2.3	59.6	8.6
Warwick ..	94.1	4.1	190.9	3.8	57.1	5.3

Food and Groceries.

During the recent quarter, the increases recorded in food prices (ranging from 3.8 per cent. in Brisbane and Bundaberg to 4.2 per cent. in Toowoomba) were less than in the previous quarter. The principal rises were in the prices of bread, tea, onions, and eggs.

Rent (4 and 5 Roomed Houses).

The rent index remained stationary in Townsville and Warwick, while increases in the other four cities varied from 0.1 per cent. in Rockhampton to 3.1 per cent. in Toowoomba.

Clothing and Footwear.

Increases in the clothing and footwear index numbers were not as great during the recent quarter as in the last quarter of 1950. Some of the increases recorded were in footwear, suits, and trousers.

Miscellaneous Items.

The rise of 8.3 per cent. in Brisbane was more than double that recorded in the preceding quarter and accounted for almost a third of the increase in the "C" Series index. This increase was due, chiefly, to increased prices of household drapery and higher charges for fares, gas, and electricity.

Comparison of Costs in Queensland Cities.

The following table shows the amounts, for the various Queensland cities, required, in March quarter, 1951, to purchase the quantity of goods or housing which would have cost £1 in Brisbane.

Amounts Required in Various Cities to Purchase Equivalent of £1 in Brisbane.

City.	All Items.			Food and Groceries.			Rent (4 and 5 Rooms).			Clothing and Footwear.			Miscellaneous Items.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Brisbane ..	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Toowoomba ..	1	0	1 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	0	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	6	19	8 $\frac{3}{4}$		1	0	2 $\frac{1}{4}$
Rockhampton..	1	0	2 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	1	5 $\frac{1}{4}$	18	2 $\frac{1}{2}$		19	8 $\frac{1}{2}$		1	0	3 $\frac{1}{2}$
Townsville ..	1	0	5 $\frac{1}{4}$	1	1	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	18	10 $\frac{1}{2}$		1	0	0	1	1	4
Bundaberg ..		19	11 $\frac{1}{4}$	1	1	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	15	8 $\frac{1}{4}$		19	11 $\frac{1}{2}$		1	0	7 $\frac{1}{4}$
Warwick ..		19	8 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	0	4 $\frac{3}{4}$	16	11 $\frac{3}{4}$		19	8 $\frac{1}{2}$		1	0	6

In relation to Brisbane prices, the cost of all items together decreased during the quarter in the five provincial cities for which data are collected.

Prices of food and groceries in Bundaberg retained the same relativity to Brisbane as in the previous quarter, but in the other four cities for which the index number is calculated their excess over Brisbane prices increased.

In comparison with Brisbane, relative prices of clothing and footwear increased in Warwick but decreased in the other four provincial cities. In Townsville, clothing and footwear which would have cost 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the £ more than in Brisbane during the December quarter of 1950 would have cost the same as in Brisbane during the March quarter of 1951.

Prices of miscellaneous items in the provincial cities covered by the survey remained dearer than in Brisbane, although these prices came closer to those prevailing in the capital city, except in Bundaberg where the excess increased by $\frac{3}{4}$ d. in the £. Largest variation recorded since the previous quarter was in Warwick, where miscellaneous items costing £1 in Brisbane would have cost £1 0s. 6d., compared with £1 1s. 1d. during the fourth quarter of last year. This variation was due mainly to the fact that Warwick electricity and gas charges remained unchanged while they were increased in Brisbane.

Basic Wage Rates, June Quarter, 1951.

Capital City.	Commonwealth Basic Wage.			State Basic Wage.								
	Males. ^a			Increase on Previous Rate.	Males.			Females.	Date of Operation.			
	£	s.	d.	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	
Brisbane ..	8	6	0	7	0	8	6	0	5	10	0	30.4.51
Sydney ..	9	0	0	7	0	9	0	0	6	15	0	1.5.51
Melbourne ..	8	17	0	7	0	(8	17	0)		a		(1.5.51) ^b
Adelaide ..	8	11	0	5	0	8	11	0	6	8	0	1.5.51
Perth ..	8	16	0	10	0	9	4	3	5	4	1	30.4.51
Hobart ..	8	13	0	8	0	(8	13	0)		a		(1.5.51) ^b

^a The female rates are 75 per cent. of the male rates.
^b No State wage declared, but rate shown is that of Commonwealth Court which is followed to a large extent.

S. E. SOLOMON,
GOVERNMENT STATISTICIAN.

BRISBANE.
10th May, 1951.

49/10/-

23/10/-

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49/10/-
510
26
679/10/-
18/-
661
49/10/-
511/10
40/-
48
471/10/-

Basic Wage Rates, June Quarter, 1951.

Capital City.	Commonwealth Basic Wage.			State Basic Wage.								
	Males. ^a			Increase on Previous Rate.	Males.			Females.	Date of Operation.			
	£	s.	d.	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	
Brisbane ..	8	6	0	7	0	8	6	0	5	10	0	30.4.51
Sydney ..	9	0	0	7	0	9	0	0	6	15	0	1.5.51
Melbourne ..	8	17	0	7	0	(8	17	0)		a		(1.5.51) ^b
Adelaide ..	8	11	0	5	0	8	11	0	6	8	0	1.5.51
Perth ..	8	16	0	10	0	9	4	3	5	4	1	30.4.51
Hobart ..	8	13	0	8	0	(8	13	0)		a		(1.5.51) ^b

^a The female rates are 75 per cent. of the male rates.

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Table No. 1 - The "All Items" Retail Prices Index - "C" Series.
(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended March, 1951.	Quarter Ended -				
				March, 1950.	June, 1950.	Sept., 1950.	Decr., 1950.	March, 1951.
Brisbane	863	1079	1522	1414	1446	1482	1546	1612
Toowoomba.. ..	851	1092	1534	1429	1455	1496	1562	1623
Rockhampton ..	861	1084	1542	1428	1461	1497	1577	1631
Townsville .. .	912	1119	1570	1469	1506	1528	1595	1651
Bundaberg.. ..	841	1059	1516	1401	1437	1471	1548	1607
Weighted Average								
Five Towns .. .	864	1082	1527	1419	1451	1487	1553	1616
Warwick	822	1073	1508	1406	1432	1474	1533	1591

Table No. 2 - Food and Groceries Retail Prices Index.

(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended March, 1951.	Quarter Ended -				
				March, 1950.	June, 1950.	Sept., 1950.	Decr., 1950.	March, 1951.
Brisbane	856	971	1514	1402	1421	1473	1551	1610
Toowoomba.. ..	814	1010	1535	1418	1441	1486	1574	1640
Rockhampton ..	895	1012	1594	1444	1462	1529	1658	1725
Townsville .. .	955	1057	1610	1499	1537	1568	1635	1700
Bundaberg.. ..	903	1027	1580	1438	1464	1517	1639	1701
Weighted Average								
Five Towns .. .	864	984	1529	1414	1435	1485	1568	1629
Warwick	846	1000	1539	1422	1444	1491	1577	1642

Table No. 3 - Clothing and Footwear Retail Prices Index.

(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended March, 1951.	Quarter Ended -				
				March, 1950.	June, 1950.	Sept., 1950.	Decr., 1950.	March, 1951.
Brisbane	829	1454	2310	2099	2197	2251	2355	2436
Toowoomba.. ..	829	1429	2295	2116	2195	2244	2338	2404
Rockhampton ..	845	1477	2307	2124	2225	2256	2347	2401
Townsville .. .	840	1457	2324	2124	2221	2260	2379	2437
Bundaberg.. ..	839	1447	2328	2128	2239	2264	2376	2431
Weighted Average								
Five Towns .. .	831	1454	2310	2105	2202	2252	2356	2431
Warwick	825	1441	2279	2093	2175	2229	2312	2400